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RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7645

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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: COLOMBO EAC MEETING: APRIL 29 ATTACK ON PETROLEUM
FACILITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FUTURE LTTE AIR ATTACKS

REF: A. COLOMGO 637

[1](#)B. COLOMBO 636

[1](#)1. (SBU) On May 2, 2007, Charge chaired a meeting of the Colombo Emergency Action Committee. Representatives from RSO, Consular, Management, Political, Econ, Public Diplomacy, IPC, USAID, DAO, ODC, IBB, and CSI attended. The EAC was convened to discuss the April 29 attack by LTTE light aircraft on two Colombo petroleum facilities (reftels) and measures to be taken in the event of future air attacks by the LTTE attacks.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The AC first addressed procedures to be followed at the Chancery and the American Center. The military ordered power to be cut in the greater Colombo area for approximately one hour during the April 29 air attacks to reduce visibility for the LTTE aircraft. While to date no written request has been received from the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) Sri Lankan army personnel asked the local guard force to turn off the Embassy generator on April 29 during the blackout. We did not comply with this verbal request. (Note: In response to previous LTTE air attacks, the GSL has directed high-rise hotels and office buildings to refrain from using their generators.) The EAC determined that due to the need to maintain communications and security systems, the Embassy would not cut its generator in the event of a future air attack. We are, however, reviewing the feasibility of turning off some, although not all, exterior lights in the event of a blackout triggered by another air strike. In addition, a Management Notice will advise employees to turn off office lights when leaving for the night, leaving only the corridor lights on during the night time hours.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The EAC determined that similar procedures would be followed at residences of Mission personnel. Generators would not be turned off, but interior lights would be reduced to the extent possible. We are reviewing the possibility of turning off some exterior lights at residences in the event of a power blackout triggered by an air strike.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The EAC discussed new security measures in the area of communications and general safety procedures during an aerial attack. Specifically, EAC decided new Security Notices would go out to all employees recommending that emergency radios be carried at night. Post One will send a message by the emergency radio network advising personnel whether a blackout is due to "normal" power supply fluctuations or the result of an air attack. The Security Notices will also advise staff in the event of an air attack to reduce illumination and move to lower level of residences near structural support, and if away from their residences to take appropriate cover. These measures were agreed upon to

limit injury from falling anti-aircraft fire or debris of a wreckage should the LTTE planes be successfully targeted and destroyed. (Note: Several persons in Colombo were injured on April 29 by falling anti-aircraft fire.) Similar language will be issued in the form of a Warden Message for AMCITS in country.

15. (SBU) The EAC discussed moves by several air carriers to suspend service or reduce flights to Colombo. Cathay Pacific and Emirates airlines have both suspended operations, while Singapore Airlines has stated it will go to daytime flights only.

16. (SBU) RSO will discuss these measures with other foreign missions in Colombo and with U.S. businesses and U.S contractors in country. Several other missions in the immediate vicinity of the U.S. Mission have received similar verbal requests from the military to refrain from the use of generators.
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